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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities--Technical Assistance and Dissemination Center on Improving Literacy through Supporting Elementary School Leaders

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department) is issuing a notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2018 for Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities--Technical Assistance and Dissemination Center on Improving Literacy through Supporting Elementary School Leaders, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 84.326L.

DATES:

Applications Available: [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on February 12, 2018 (83 FR 6003) and available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-12/pdf/2018-02558.pdf.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kristen Rhoads, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5142, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-5108. Telephone: (202) 245-6715. Email: Kristen.Rhoads@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program is to promote academic achievement and to improve results for children with disabilities by providing technical assistance (TA), supporting model demonstration projects, disseminating useful information, and implementing

activities that are supported by scientifically based research.

Priority: In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), this priority is from allowable activities specified in the statute (see sections 663 and 681(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); 20 U.S.C. 1463 and 1481(d)).

Absolute Priority: For FY 2018 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is:

Technical Assistance and Dissemination Center on Improving Literacy through Supporting Elementary School Leaders.

Background:

The mission of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is to improve early childhood, educational, and employment outcomes and raise expectations for all people with disabilities, their families, their communities, and the Nation.

The National Reading Panel report (2000) and RAND report *Reading for Understanding* (Snow, 2001) have

influenced reading instruction in the United States for the last two decades (Connor & Al Otaiba, 2015). During this time, reading instruction in the primary grades has improved by targeting important literacy skills highlighted in the reports and becoming more systematic in how these skills are taught (S. Baker, Fien, & Baker, 2010).

Despite noted improvements in reading instruction, the gap between students with disabilities and their peers on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has increased in both fourth and eighth grades since 2009 (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). In addition, less than 50 percent of teachers surveyed report that they adhere to their core reading curricula, and more than 60 percent of teachers report that they continue to use an “eclectic approach” combining different instructional methods for teaching reading (Kretlow & Helf, 2013). Kretlow and Helf also reported that most of the curricula teachers used had not been evaluated for impact on student learning. Also, according to the Schools and Staffing Survey (Rotermund, DeRoche, & Ottem, 2017), 43 percent of teachers reported receiving no professional development on reading instruction in the last 12 months. Further, in a separate survey, two-thirds of teachers reported receiving fewer than eight hours of professional development on reading

instruction during the last year, an intensity unlikely to improve the quality of reading instruction that they provide or result in improved student outcomes (Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Adamson, 2010; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007).

School leaders (as defined in this notice) have the ability to affect these trends, and research has clearly demonstrated the effects that they can have on the academic performance of their schools (Herman et al., 2017; Horng, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2009; Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders,¹ developed by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2015), illustrate the variety of activities under the purview of school leaders. School leaders' responsibilities include managing school operations and resources, including managing budgets, resources, and hiring personnel; overseeing curriculum, instruction, and assessment; striving for equity in educational opportunity for each student; developing the professional capacity and practice of school personnel; and engaging in internal and external relations including

¹ For more information about the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, please see <http://npbea.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/PSEL-WebinarPowerPointSlides.pdf>.

fostering a professional community of school personnel and engaging families and the community (Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015).

School leaders' organizational management activities, such as managing budget and resources and hiring staff, make the school organization work and provide support for teaching and learning (Grissom & Loeb, 2011). These types of activities, as well as school leaders spending more time on them, have shown consistent associations with positive student academic outcomes (Grissom & Loeb, 2011).

There have been mixed findings regarding the extent to which school leaders' instruction-related activities, such as overseeing the curriculum and providing professional development for staff, are associated with improved student outcomes (Horng et al., 2010; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). A number of possible explanations for this variation exist, including potential variation in the quantity of time spent on instructional management, the specific types of instruction-related activities school leaders engage in (Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013), and the quality of instructional management training received by school leaders. In particular, some researchers have argued that current training on instruction-related

activities may be too narrow and may not include training in the organizational management skills that help school leaders target resources effectively in addressing the instructional needs of their students (Grissom & Loeb, 2011).

The Center on Improving Literacy through Supporting Elementary School Leaders (the Center) will provide TA for school leaders on instructional content and leadership skills to improve teacher implementation of evidence-based (as defined in this notice) literacy practices and literacy skills of students with, or at risk for, literacy-related disabilities. Specifically, the Center will provide TA for LEAs and their school leaders on a variety of topics, namely: providing professional development, including coaching, to their teachers and other instructional personnel on literacy; developing education programming related to literacy; allocating resources efficiently and effectively so that students with, or at risk for, literacy-related disabilities have access to literacy instruction and interventions that meet their individual needs; and improving teacher implementation of evidence-based literacy instruction in their schools and, ultimately, literacy outcomes for their students with, or at risk for, literacy-related disabilities. The Center may

build upon the work of, and collaborate with, other Department TA centers including the National Center on Improving Literacy, the National Center on Intensive Intervention, and the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders. The work of this Center will not duplicate work being conducted by other Department TA Centers. This priority is consistent with the Secretary's Final Supplemental Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on March 2, 2018 (83 FR 9096) (Supplemental Priorities): Supplemental Priority 5--Meeting the Unique Needs of Students and Children With Disabilities and/or Those With Unique Gifts and Talents; Supplemental Priority 7--Promoting Literacy; and Supplemental Priority 8--Promoting Effective Instruction in Classrooms and Schools.

Priority:

The purpose of this priority is to fund a cooperative agreement to establish and operate a Center on Improving Literacy through Supporting Elementary School Leaders (Literacy through Leaders). The Center will provide targeted TA to school leaders on literacy skills and concepts (e.g., phonemic awareness, comprehension) and leadership skills (e.g., coaching, instructional management and programming, organizational management) related to

improving teachers' implementation of evidence-based literacy practices and literacy outcomes for their students with, or at risk for, literacy-related disabilities. The Center will support school leaders in recognizing evidence-based literacy practices for students with, or at risk for, literacy-related disabilities and facilitating the implementation of these practices through developing education programming and professional development efforts, including coaching teachers. The Center must achieve, at a minimum, the following expected outcomes:

(a) Improved literacy achievement and skills of students with, or at risk for, literacy-related disabilities;

(b) Improved capacity of school leaders for identifying and supporting the implementation of evidence-based literacy practices, including assessments, that improve teachers' practices as well as literacy achievement and skills of students with, or at risk for, literacy-related disabilities;

(c) Improved capacity of teachers and other instructional personnel to implement with fidelity evidence-based literacy practices, including assessments, that improve literacy achievement and skills of students with, or at risk for, literacy-related disabilities;

(d) Improved quality of literacy instruction throughout the school; and

(e) Reduction in the number of students inappropriately referred for special education and related services.

In addition to these programmatic requirements, to be considered for funding under this priority, applicants must meet the application and administrative requirements in this priority, which are:

(a) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Significance of the Project," how the proposed project will--

(1) Address current and emerging needs of elementary school leaders to improve teacher implementation of evidence-based literacy practices and outcomes of their students with, or at risk for, literacy-related disabilities. To meet this requirement the applicant must--

(i) Present applicable national, State, regional, or local data demonstrating the need to address elementary school leaders' knowledge of evidence-based literacy practices and leadership skills with the goal of improving teacher implementation of evidence-based literacy practices and, ultimately, the literacy outcomes of their students with, or at risk for, literacy-related disabilities;

(ii) Demonstrate knowledge of current educational issues and policy initiatives relating to implementing and sustaining professional learning practices and activities for elementary school leaders that have evidence for producing positive effects on teacher implementation of evidence-based literacy practices in their schools, students' literacy achievement, or reducing the numbers of students inappropriately referred for needing special education and related services; and

(iii) Present information about the current level of implementation of:

(A) Practices and activities focused on improving leadership skills of elementary school leaders, including developing educational programming, allocating resources for instruction and intervention effectively and efficiently, and providing professional development to teachers in their schools; and

(B) Evidence-based literacy instruction, intervention, and assessment for students with, or at risk for, literacy-related disabilities in elementary schools;

(2) Improve elementary school leaders' literacy-related knowledge and leadership skills; their schools' literacy-related core instruction, supplemental intervention, and assessment; and literacy-related outcomes

for students with, or at risk for, disabilities and indicate the likely magnitude or importance of the improvements.

(b) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the Project Services," how the proposed project will--

(1) Ensure equal access and treatment for members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe how it will--

(i) Identify the needs of the intended recipients for TA and information; and

(ii) Ensure that services and products meet the needs of the intended recipients of the grant;

(2) Achieve its goals, objectives, and intended outcomes. To meet this requirement, the applicant must provide--

(i) Measurable intended project outcomes; and

(ii) In Appendix A, the logic model (as defined in this notice) by which the proposed project will achieve its intended outcomes that depicts, at a minimum, the goals, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes of the proposed project;

(3) Use a conceptual framework (and provide a copy in Appendix A) to develop project plans and activities, describing any underlying concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, or theories, as well as the presumed relationships or linkages among these variables, and any empirical support for this framework;

Note: The following websites provide more information on logic models and conceptual frameworks:

www.osepideasthatwork.org/logicModel and

www.osepideasthatwork.org/resources-grantees/program-areas/ta-ta/tad-project-logic-model-and-conceptual-framework.

(4) Be based on current research and make use of evidence-based practices (EBPs). To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) The current research on professional learning practices for school leaders, particularly elementary school leaders, and school leader behaviors or characteristics that are associated with improved classroom teaching practices and positive student literacy-related outcomes and on related EBPs that will inform the proposed TA;

(ii) The current research about adult learning principles and implementation science that will inform the proposed TA;

(iii) How the proposed project will incorporate current research and EBPs in the development and delivery of its products and services; and

(5) Develop products and provide services that are of high quality and sufficient intensity and duration to achieve the intended outcomes of the proposed project. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) How it proposes to identify or develop the knowledge base on effective practices for improving literacy knowledge and instructional and organizational management capacity of elementary school leaders;

(ii) Its proposed approaches to providing varying levels of intensity of TA (i.e., universal,² targeted,³

² "Universal, general TA" means TA and information provided to independent users through their own initiative, resulting in minimal interaction with TA center staff and including one-time, invited or offered conference presentations by TA center staff. This category of TA also includes information or products, such as newsletters, guidebooks, fact sheets, issues briefs, massive open online courses (MOOCs), or research syntheses, downloaded from the TA center's website by independent users. Brief communications by TA center staff with recipients, either by telephone or email, are also considered universal, general TA

³ "Targeted, specialized TA" means TA services based on needs common to multiple recipients and not extensively individualized. A relationship is established between the TA recipient and one or more TA center staff. This category of TA includes one-time, labor-intensive events, such as facilitating strategic planning or hosting regional or national

intensive⁴) based on the needs of the field and available resources. The applicant must identify the intended recipients (e.g., local educational agencies (LEAs) and school leaders in sites other than traditional public elementary school settings where students are supported under IDEA, including private schools), including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services through each approach and how they plan to reach a variety of settings and populations (e.g., urban, rural, suburban); and

(A) For implementing targeted, specialized TA, its proposed approach to measure the readiness of potential TA recipients (e.g., LEAs) to work with the project, assessing, at a minimum, their current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity at the local level; and

conferences. It can also include episodic, less labor-intensive events that extend over a period of time, such as facilitating a series of conference calls on single or multiple topics that are designed around the needs of the recipients. Facilitating communities of practice can also be considered targeted, specialized TA.

⁴ "Intensive, sustained TA" means TA services often provided on-site and requiring a stable, ongoing relationship between the TA center staff and the TA recipient. "TA services" are defined as negotiated series of activities designed to reach a valued outcome. This category of TA should result in changes to policy, program, practice, or operations that support increased recipient capacity or improved outcomes at one or more systems levels.

(B) For implementing intensive, sustained TA, its proposed approach to measure the readiness of the LEAs and elementary school leaders to work with the project, including their commitment to the initiative, alignment of the initiative to their needs, current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity at the local district and school level; and its proposed plan for working with appropriate levels of the education system (e.g., State education agencies (SEAs), regional TA providers, districts, schools, families) to ensure that there is communication between each level and that there are systems in place to support the use of evidence-based literacy practices;

(6) Develop products and implement services that maximize efficiency. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) How the proposed project will use technology to achieve the intended project outcomes;

(ii) With whom the proposed project will collaborate and not duplicate (e.g., The National Center on Improving Literacy, National Center on Intensive Intervention, State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center, and related professional organizations, including those that offer training programs targeting school

leaders) and the intended outcomes of this collaboration;
and

(iii) How the proposed project will use non-project resources to achieve the intended project outcomes.

(c) In the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the Evaluation Plan," include an evaluation plan for the project developed in consultation with and implemented by a third-party evaluator.⁵ The evaluation plan must--

(1) Articulate formative and summative evaluation questions, including important process and outcome evaluation questions. These questions should be related to the project's proposed logic model required in paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this notice;

(2) Describe how progress in and fidelity of implementation, as well as project outcomes, including how successfully materials are disseminated to, and used by, relevant stakeholder groups and professional organizations, will be measured to answer the evaluation questions. Specify the measures and associated instruments or sources

⁵ A "third-party" evaluator is an independent and impartial program evaluator who is contracted by the grantee to conduct an objective evaluation of the project. This evaluator must not have participated in the development or implementation of any project activities, except for the evaluation activities, nor have any financial interest in the outcome of the evaluation.

for data appropriate to the evaluation questions. Include information regarding reliability and validity of measures where appropriate;

(3) Describe strategies for analyzing data and how data collected as part of this plan will be used to inform and improve service delivery over the course of the project and to refine the proposed logic model and evaluation plan, including subsequent data collection;

(4) Provide a timeline for conducting the evaluation, and include staff assignments for completing the plan. The timeline must indicate that the data will be available annually for the Annual Performance Report (APR) and at the end of Year 2 for the review process described under the heading, Fourth and Fifth Years of the Project;

(5) Dedicate sufficient funds in each budget year to cover the costs of developing or refining the evaluation plan in consultation with a "third-party" evaluator, as well as the costs associated with the implementation of the evaluation plan by the third-party evaluator.

(d) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Adequacy of Project Resources," how--

(1) The proposed project will encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race,

color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, as appropriate;

(2) The proposed key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors have the qualifications and experience to carry out the proposed activities and achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The applicant and any key partners have adequate resources to carry out the proposed activities; and

(4) The proposed costs are reasonable in relation to the anticipated results and benefits.

(e) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the Management Plan," how--

(1) The proposed management plan will ensure that the project's intended outcomes will be achieved on time and within budget. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) Clearly defined responsibilities for key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors, as applicable; and

(ii) Timelines and milestones for accomplishing the project tasks;

(2) Key project personnel and any consultants and subcontractors will be allocated and how these allocations

are appropriate and adequate to achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The proposed management plan will ensure that the products and services provided are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients; and

(4) The proposed project will benefit from a diversity of perspectives, including those of families, educators, TA providers, researchers, and policy makers, among others, in its development and operation.

(f) Address the following application requirements. The applicant must--

(1) Include, in Appendix A, personnel-loading charts and timelines, as applicable, to illustrate the management plan described in the narrative;

(2) Include, in the budget, attendance at the following:

(i) A one and one-half day kick-off meeting in Washington, DC, after receipt of the award, and an annual planning meeting in Washington, DC, with the OSEP project officer and other relevant staff during each subsequent year of the project period.

Note: Within 30 days of receipt of the award, a post-award teleconference must be held between the OSEP project

officer and the grantee's project director or other authorized representative;

(ii) A two and one-half day project directors' conference in Washington, DC, during each year of the project period;

(iii) One annual trip to attend Department briefings, Department-sponsored conferences, and other meetings, as requested by OSEP; and

(iv) A one-day intensive 3+2 review meeting in Washington, DC, during the last half of the second year of the project period;

(3) Include, in the budget, a line item for an annual set-aside of five percent of the grant amount to support emerging needs that are consistent with the proposed project's intended outcomes, as those needs are identified in consultation with, and approved by, the OSEP project officer. With approval from the OSEP project officer, the project must reallocate any remaining funds from this annual set-aside no later than the end of the third quarter of each budget period;

(4) Maintain a high-quality website, with an easy-to-navigate design, that meets government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility; and

(5) Include, in Appendix A, an assurance to assist OSEP with the transfer of pertinent resources and products and to maintain the continuity of services to States during the transition to this new award period and at the end of this award period, as appropriate.

Fourth and Fifth Years of the Project:

In deciding whether to continue funding the project for the fourth and fifth years, the Secretary will consider the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a), as well as--

(a) The recommendation of a 3+2 review team consisting of experts selected by the Secretary. This review will be conducted during a one-day intensive meeting that will be held during the last half of the second year of the project period;

(b) The timeliness with which, and how well, the requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the project; and

(c) The quality, relevance, and usefulness of the project's products and services and the extent to which the project's products and services are aligned with the project's objectives and likely to result in the project achieving its intended outcomes.

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Definitions:

The following definitions are from 34 CFR 77.1 and section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA), as marked.

Demonstrates a rationale (34 CFR 77.1) means a key project component included in the project's logic model is informed by research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes.

Evidence-based (34 CFR 77.1) means the proposed project component is supported by one or more of strong evidence, moderate evidence, promising evidence, or evidence that demonstrates a rationale.

Experimental study (34 CFR 77.1) means a study that is designed to compare outcomes between two groups of individuals (such as students) that are otherwise equivalent except for their assignment to either a treatment group receiving a project component or a control

group that does not. Randomized controlled trials, regression discontinuity design studies, and single-case design studies are the specific types of experimental studies that, depending on their design and implementation (e.g., sample attrition in randomized controlled trials and regression discontinuity design studies), can meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards without reservations as described in the WWC Handbook:

(i) A randomized controlled trial employs random assignment of, for example, students, teachers, classrooms, or schools to receive the project component being evaluated (the treatment group) or not to receive the project component (the control group).

(ii) A regression discontinuity design study assigns the project component being evaluated using a measured variable (e.g., assigning students reading below a cutoff score to tutoring or developmental education classes) and controls for that variable in the analysis of outcomes.

(iii) A single-case design study uses observations of a single case (e.g., a student eligible for a behavioral intervention) over time in the absence and presence of a controlled treatment manipulation to determine whether the outcome is systematically related to the treatment.

Logic model (34 CFR 77.1) (also referred to as a theory of action) means a framework that identifies key project components of the proposed project (i.e., the active “ingredients” that are hypothesized to be critical to achieving the relevant outcomes) and describes the theoretical and operational relationships among the key project components and relevant outcomes.

Moderate evidence (34 CFR 77.1) means that there is evidence of effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome for a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed to receive that component, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

- (i) A practice guide prepared by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook reporting a “strong evidence base” or “moderate evidence base” for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;

- (ii) An intervention report prepared by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook reporting a “positive effect” or “potentially positive effect” on a relevant outcome based on a “medium to large” extent of evidence, with no reporting of a “negative effect” or “potentially negative effect” on a relevant outcome; or

(iii) A single experimental study or quasi-experimental design study reviewed and reported by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook, or otherwise assessed by the Department using version 3.0 of the WWC Handbook, as appropriate, and that--

(A) Meets WWC standards with or without reservations;

(B) Includes at least one statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect on a relevant outcome;

(C) Includes no overriding statistically significant and negative effects on relevant outcomes reported in the study or in a corresponding WWC intervention report prepared under version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook; and

(D) Is based on a sample from more than one site (e.g., State, county, city, school district, or postsecondary campus) and includes at least 350 students or other individuals across sites. Multiple studies of the same project component that each meet requirements in paragraphs (iii)(A), (B), and (C) of this definition may together satisfy this requirement.

Project component (34 CFR 77.1) means an activity, strategy, intervention, process, product, practice, or policy included in a project. Evidence may pertain to an individual project component or to a combination of project

components (e.g., training teachers on instructional practices for English learners and follow-on coaching for these teachers).

Promising evidence (34 CFR 77.1) means that there is evidence of the effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

- (i) A practice guide prepared by WWC reporting a “strong evidence base” or “moderate evidence base” for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;

- (ii) An intervention report prepared by the WWC reporting a “positive effect” or “potentially positive effect” on a relevant outcome with no reporting of a “negative effect” or “potentially negative effect” on a relevant outcome; or

- (iii) A single study assessed by the Department, as appropriate, that--

- (A) Is an experimental study, a quasi-experimental design study, or a well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias (e.g., a study using regression methods to account for differences between a treatment group and a comparison group); and

(B) Includes at least one statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect on a relevant outcome.

Quasi-experimental design study (34 CFR 77.1) means a study using a design that attempts to approximate an experimental study by identifying a comparison group that is similar to the treatment group in important respects. This type of study, depending on design and implementation (e.g., establishment of baseline equivalence of the groups being compared), can meet WWC standards with reservations, but cannot meet WWC standards without reservations, as described in the WWC Handbook.

Relevant outcome (34 CFR 77.1) means the student outcome(s) or other outcome(s) the key project component is designed to improve, consistent with the specific goals of the program.

School leader (section 8101 of the ESEA) means a principal, assistant principal, or other individual who is-

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(a) An employee or officer of an elementary school or secondary school, local educational agency, or other entity operating an elementary school or secondary school; and

(b) Responsible for the daily instructional leadership and managerial operations in the elementary school or secondary school building.

Strong evidence (34 CFR 77.1) means that there is evidence of the effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome for a sample that overlaps with the populations and settings proposed to receive that component, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

(i) A practice guide prepared by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook reporting a “strong evidence base” for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;

(ii) An intervention report prepared by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook reporting a “positive effect” on a relevant outcome based on a “medium to large” extent of evidence, with no reporting of a “negative effect” or “potentially negative effect” on a relevant outcome; or

(iii) A single experimental study reviewed and reported by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook, or otherwise assessed by the Department using version 3.0 of the WWC Handbook, as appropriate, and that--

(A) Meets WWC standards without reservations;

(B) Includes at least one statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect on a relevant outcome;

(C) Includes no overriding statistically significant and negative effects on relevant outcomes reported in the study or in a corresponding WWC intervention report prepared under version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook; and

(D) Is based on a sample from more than one site (e.g., State, county, city, school district, or postsecondary campus) and includes at least 350 students or other individuals across sites. Multiple studies of the same project component that each meet requirements in paragraphs (iii)(A), (B), and (C) of this definition may together satisfy this requirement.

What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (WWC Handbook) (34 CFR 77.1) means the standards and procedures set forth in the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Version 3.0 or Version 2.1 (incorporated by reference, see 34 CFR 77.2). Study findings eligible for review under WWC standards can meet WWC standards without reservations, meet WWC standards with reservations, or not meet WWC standards. WWC practice guides and intervention reports include findings from systematic reviews of evidence as described in the Handbook documentation.

Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking: Under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C. 553) the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed priorities and requirements. Section 681(d) of IDEA, however, makes the public comment requirements of the APA inapplicable to the priority in this notice.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1463 and 1481.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 79 apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian Tribes.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education (IHEs) only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative agreement.

Estimated Available Funds: \$750,000.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2019 from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Maximum Award: We will not make an award exceeding \$750,000 for a single budget period of 12 months.

Estimated Number of Awards: 1.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: SEAs; State lead agencies under Part C of the IDEA; local educational agencies (LEAs), including public charter schools that operate as LEAs under State law; IHEs; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; freely associated States and outlying areas; Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching: This program does not require cost sharing or matching.

3. Subgrantees: Under 34 CFR 75.708(b) and (c) a grantee under this competition may award subgrants--to directly carry out project activities described in its

application--to the following types of entities: IHEs and private nonprofit organizations suitable to carry out the activities proposed in the application. The grantee may award subgrants to entities it has identified in an approved application.

4. Other General Requirements: (a) Recipients of funding under this competition must make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities (see section 606 of IDEA).

(b) Applicants for, and recipients of, funding must, with respect to the aspects of their proposed project relating to the absolute priority, involve individuals with disabilities, or parents of individuals with disabilities ages birth through 26, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project (see section 682(a)(1)(A) of IDEA).

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Application Submission Instructions: For information on how to submit an application please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on February 12, 2018 (83 FR 6003) and available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-12/pdf/2018-02558.pdf.

2. Intergovernmental Review: This competition is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. However, under 34 CFR 79.8(a), we waive intergovernmental review in order to make an award by the end of FY 2018.

3. Funding Restrictions: We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

4. Recommended Page Limit: The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative to no more than 70 pages, and (2) use the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double-space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, reference citations, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.
- Use a font that is 12 point or larger.
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended page limit does not apply to Part I, the cover sheet; Part II, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; or the abstract (follow the guidance provided in the application package for completing the abstract), the table of contents, the list of priority requirements, the resumes, the reference list, the letters of support, or the appendices. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative, including all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 and are listed below:

(a) Significance (10 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project,

including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

(ii) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project.

(b) Quality of project services (35 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

(ii) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.

(iii) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(iv) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

(v) The extent to which the technical assistance services to be provided by the proposed project involve the use of efficient strategies, including the use of technology, as appropriate, and the leveraging of non-project resources.

(c) Quality of the project evaluation (20 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies.

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(iv) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(d) Adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel (15 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project and the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.

(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(iii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

(iv) The qualifications, including relevant training, experience, and independence, of the evaluator.

(v) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization.

(vi) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.

(vii) The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project.

(viii) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(e) Quality of the management plan (20 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(ii) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

(iii) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project.

(iv) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

2. Review and Selection Process: We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to

submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary requires various assurances, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Education (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

3. Additional Review and Selection Process Factors:

In the past, the Department has had difficulty finding peer reviewers for certain competitions because so many individuals who are eligible to serve as peer reviewers have conflicts of interest. The standing panel requirements under section 682(b) of IDEA also have placed additional constraints on the availability of reviewers. Therefore, the Department has determined that for some discretionary grant competitions, applications may be separated into two or more groups and ranked and selected for funding within specific groups. This procedure will make it easier for the Department to find peer reviewers by ensuring that greater numbers of individuals who are eligible to serve as reviewers for any particular group of applicants will not have conflicts of interest. It also will increase the quality, independence, and fairness of

the review process, while permitting panel members to review applications under discretionary grant competitions for which they also have submitted applications.

4. Risk Assessment and Specific Conditions:

Consistent with 2 CFR 200.205, before awarding grants under this competition the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 3474.10, the Secretary may impose specific conditions and, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 2 CFR part 200, subpart D; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

5. Integrity and Performance System: If you are selected under this competition to receive an award that over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$150,000), under 2 CFR 200.205(a)(2) we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards--that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant--before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the

Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through the System for Award Management. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

Please note that, if the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from the Federal Government exceeds \$10,000,000, the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, require you to report certain integrity information to FAPIIS semiannually. Please review the requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, if this grant plus all the other Federal funds you receive exceed \$10,000,000.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your GAN. We may notify you informally, also.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other

requirements in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. Open Licensing Requirements: Unless an exception applies, if you are awarded a grant under this competition, you will be required to openly license to the public grant deliverables created in whole, or in part, with Department grant funds. When the deliverable consists of modifications to pre-existing works, the license extends only to those modifications that can be separately identified and only to the extent that open licensing is permitted under the terms of any licenses or other legal restrictions on the use of pre-existing works. Additionally, a grantee or subgrantee that is awarded competitive grant funds must have a plan to disseminate these public grant deliverables. This dissemination plan can be developed and submitted after your application has been reviewed and selected for funding. For additional

information on the open licensing requirements please refer to 2 CFR 3474.20.

4. Reporting: (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multiyear award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.

5. Performance Measures: Under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, the Department has established a set of performance measures, including long-term measures, that are designed to yield information on various aspects of the effectiveness and quality of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services

and Results for Children With Disabilities program. These measures are:

- Program Performance Measure #1: The percentage of Technical Assistance and Dissemination products and services deemed to be of high quality by an independent review panel of experts qualified to review the substantive content of the products and services.

- Program Performance Measure #2: The percentage of Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination products and services deemed by an independent review panel of qualified experts to be of high relevance to educational and early intervention policy or practice.

- Program Performance Measure #3: The percentage of all Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination products and services deemed by an independent review panel of qualified experts to be useful in improving educational or early intervention policy or practice.

- Program Performance Measure #4: The cost efficiency of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination Program includes the percentage of milestones achieved in the current annual performance report period and the percentage of funds spent during the current fiscal year.

- Long-term Program Performance Measure: The percentage of States receiving Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination services regarding scientifically or evidence-based practices for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities that successfully promote the implementation of those practices in school districts and service agencies.

The measures apply to projects funded under this competition, and grantees are required to submit data on these measures as directed by OSEP.

Grantees will be required to report information on their project's performance in annual and final performance reports to the Department (34 CFR 75.590).

6. Continuation Awards: In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

In making a continuation award, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance

with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Other Information

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc) by contacting the Management Support Services Team, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5113, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-2500. Telephone: (202) 245-7363. If you use a TDD or a TTY, call the FRS, toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

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use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

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Dated: July 26, 2018

Johnny W. Collett,
*Assistant Secretary for Special
Education and Rehabilitative
Services.*

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